



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Farm Service Agency

March 2004

Fact Sheet Outreach Program

Montana State Producer Handbook



Background

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides educational information regarding farm commodity and conservation programs to all interested individuals.

FSA implements outreach activities to individuals, especially the underserved, or those individuals who have historically not participated in the Agency's programs and services.

Underserved customers include:

- Farmers/ranchers and landowners/operators with limited resources, minority groups (including American Indians, Alaskan Natives, and Aleuts), women, and the physically challenged who may need, but have not fully benefited from, USDA assistance;
- Individuals and groups who have not participated in or have received limited benefits from FSA programs that may improve their quality of life and/or the environment;
- Rural and urban community members;
- Members of religious minorities;

- Small specialty crop farmers, organic farmers, and other farmers with production practices which are different from most farmers in the area.

FSA's goal is to increase the participation of underserved customers in programs offered.

To ensure maximum participation in FSA programs and services for underserved customers, FSA works with its partners and customers to eliminate the following barriers:

- All forms of discrimination, including racial, ethnic, cultural, and gender prejudices;
- Language, communication, transportation, and FSA program requirements and signup procedures;
- Limited access to FSA programs in remote areas.

FSA Employees:

- Provide resources to assist underserved farmers and ranchers improve their income through better farm management and financial planning;
- Provide information on loans, farm commodities, and conservation programs to underserved farmers and ranchers who are unable to obtain conventional credit;
- Work with community-based organizations (including churches; social groups; 1862, 1890, and 1994 Land

Grant Colleges and Universities; Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities; and tribally-controlled colleges to provide technical assistance, training, and enhanced program delivery to underserved communities and other USDA agencies;

- Help customers understand USDA programs and fill out program forms;
- Provide program and service information to all customers in a customer-friendly and timely manner.

FSA in Montana

- Provides office time on all seven of Montana's reservations. Contact the local county FSA office for specific office hours on your reservation.
- In cooperation with other USDA agencies hosts the Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture Symposium addressing pertinent issues facing women involved in Montana agriculture.
- Ensures equal representation of minorities and underserved customers on local FSA county committees.
- Provides educational information regarding programs administered by FSA through media sources, Montana agricultural and community organizations, schools, and state and federal agencies.

- Provides educational materials to Montana schools stressing the importance of Agriculture to Montana.
- Maintains the Montana FSA website including important program information and signup deadlines pertinent to Montana producers.
- Attends career fairs, Natural Resource Symposiums and agricultural organization conventions to provide program information and career opportunities offered through FSA.

For Additional Information

Additional information may be obtained at local FSA offices or through the Montana FSA Web site at www.fsa.usda.gov/mt. The telephone numbers are usually listed in the telephone directory under the United States Government, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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